# **EXHIBIT** A

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SAN MATEO COUNTY

AUG - 5 2016

Clerk of the Superior County

KATHRYN BURKETT DICKSON, State Bar No. 70636 EMILY A. NUGENT, State Bar No. 255048

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Attorneys for Plaintiff IAN HOFMANN

# SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

## FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

# UNLIMITED JURISDICTION

IAN HOFMANN
Plaintiff,

VIRGIN AMERICA, INC. and DOES 1 through 10,

Defendants.

Case No.

16CIV00799

## **COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES**

Wrongful Termination in Violation of Public Policy; Retaliation in Violation of Labor Code section 1102.5; Breach of contract and breach of the covenant of good faith and fair dealing

**DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL** 

#### I. NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This is an individual action brought by an airline pilot, Plaintiff Captain Ian Hofmann against his former employer, Virgin America, Inc. ("Virgin"). Mr. Hofmann alleges Virgin wrongfully terminated him in retaliation for complaints he raised about airline safety. Captain Hofmann's claims include tortious wrongful termination in violation of public policy; retaliation in violation of California Labor Code section 1102.5; breach of contract; and breach of the covenant of good faith and fair dealing.

## II. PARTIES

2. At all times material to this Complaint, Plaintiff Ian Hofmann was employed by Defendant Virgin America as an airline captain. During his employment with Virgin, he was a

Complaint for Damages; Demand for Jury Trial

citizen and resident of Florida. He is currently a resident of the country of Vietnam.

- 3. Defendant Virgin America, a U.S. domestic airline, launched in 2007. Virgin has its headquarters and principal place of business at 555 Airport Boulevard, Suite 500, Burlingame, California, County of San Mateo and operates a mainline fleet based at San Francisco International Airport. Defendant operates at airports throughout California, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. It is therefore a citizen of the State of California. Virgin has more than 3,000 employees.
- 4. Plaintiff is ignorant of the true names or capacities of the Defendants sued under the fictitious names of Does 1 through 10, inclusive, and therefore sues those Defendants under such fictitious names. Plaintiff will amend this complaint to allege the true names or capacities of these Defendants once they have been ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and believes that each of the fictitiously-named Doe defendants, including any such defendants that may be the agents, representatives, or parent or subsidiary corporations of the named Defendant, is responsible in some manner for the occurrences, events, transactions, and injuries alleged in this Complaint, and that the harm suffered by Plaintiff was proximately caused by them in addition to Defendant.
- 5. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thus alleges that each of the Defendants, including the Doe defendants, acted in concert with each and every other defendant, intended to and did participate in the events, acts, practices and courses of conduct alleged in this Complaint, and was a proximate cause of damage and injury to Plaintiff as alleged.
- 6. At all relevant times, each Defendant was the agent or employee of each of the other Defendants and was acting within the course and scope of such agency or employment.

#### III. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

7. Plaintiff Ian Hofmann served as an aircraft captain for nearly eight years at Virgin America, having been hired as one of the airline's first captains in 2006. Captain Hofmann has been a commercial pilot for many years, and prior to being recruited by Virgin America, Captain Hofmann had flown for Evergreen, Piedmont, and US Airways. He has flown for a total of 36 years, the last thirteen in the position of Captain, with an impeccable safety record. He has never been involved in any accident, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) violation, nor has he

failed any training or certification.

- 8. Virgin America is not an "at will" employer with respect to its pilots. The company and the pilots' agreement regarding the terms and conditions of the pilots' employment is set forth in Virgin's "Pilot Rule Book." Virgin has specifically agreed that pilots can only be terminated based upon established "just cause." The agreement between the company and its pilots also includes a progressive discipline system which involves progressive steps of verbal counseling or warnings, initial written performance improvement plans (PIP #1), final written performance improvement plans (PIP #2), and ultimately, separation from employment.
- 9. Over ten years ago, the FAA established the "Aviation Safety Action Program" (ASAP), a safety program designed to encourage aviation employees to voluntarily report safety information that may help identify actual or potential threats to air passengers' safety. Through the program, Airline representatives work with the FAA and employee associations, such as a union or at non-union airlines like Virgin a peer group, to review reports submitted by employees. Known as the Event Review Committee or ERC, this committee works to identify causal contributors and to develop corrective actions for individuals and recommendations to the airline or other entities to prevent recurrence. Much of the information reported through ASAP would be otherwise unknown and is critical to identifying safety risks. To encourage reporting, the airline is directed to establish a system for reports which prevents the airline employer and others from identifying the "whistleblower" who brought the ASAP complaint forward. FAA regulations and guidelines cover such ASAP programs.
- 10. On April 9, 2014, Captain Hofmann filed an ASAP report which detailed operational non-conformance and insubordination by his co-pilot. On April 8, 2014, the First Officer co-pilot disputed the proper flap configuration directed by Captain Hofmann for the gusty cross wind landing on a flight they completed that day. Captain Hofmann's directions had been consistent with Virgin's standard operating procedure and the manuals for the Airbus they were flying. The co-pilot who disobeyed the order regarding the flap configuration, further refused an order to inform Air Traffic Control (ATC) they would be slowing to 230 knots because of turbulence, and generally failed to cooperate with the landing of the plane,

Realizing that there were serious issues, potentially jeopardizing passenger safety, Captain

Hofmann promptly filed an online ASAP report following the flight on April 9 within the

mandatory time period for reporting, which Captain Hofmann believes is within twenty-four
hours of returning to their base at LAX.

11. Virgin's ERC committee dismissed Captain Hofmann's ASAP complaint on May

29. 2014, claiming it did not involve a legitimate safety issue. Captain Hofmann appealed the

jeopardizing the potential safety of the passengers. When the same co-pilot continued his pattern

of insubordination on the flight the following day, Captain Hofmann became concerned.

- 29, 2014, claiming it did not involve a legitimate safety issue. Captain Hofmann appealed the dismissal, and later learned that Virgin had gone forward with the appeal meeting, rejecting the appeal, even though the required FAA representative was not present at the meeting.
- program and challenged Virgin's handling of complaints on several grounds. He complained internally to the Virgin ASAP program manager and Virgin's Director of Operations, and informed them of his intent to contact the FAA about Virgin's failure to follow federal regulations and standards for the program. One important example was Virgin's failure to ensure the confidentiality of reporting. With great ease, Virgin managers and other employees were able to determine who filed complaints, undermining the confidentiality that is critical to the program's success. The online reporting system was open and accessible to any Virgin America employee, including management and other pilots. Another example Captain Hofmann cited was Virgin's actions in proceeding with ERC meetings and deliberations without having the FAA representative present. His concerns were ultimately substantiated by the FAA but only after Virgin had fired him for raising the issues in the first place.
- 13. After Virgin rejected his ASAP report in May, Captain Hofmann tried to resolve the issues within Virgin during June 2014. When Virgin management was failing to address the issues he raised, Captain Hofmann wrote an email on June 12, 2014, in which he stated "[I] will have no other resource to resolve these issues other than making my inquiries to the FAA." At that point, Virgin began a systematic campaign of retaliation against him, including a Virgin America human resources department investigation against Captain Hofmann, which was

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commenced on July 2, less than three weeks after he indicated an intent to contact the FAA. The investigation was not carried out in a fair and impartial manner and the claims against Captain Hofinann were trumped up by management, displeased with his criticism of the ASAP program, his filing of the ASAP report, and his stated intent to contact the FAA.

- 14. Captain Hofmann contacted the FAA and it began an investigation of Virgin's handling of the ASAP program. Captain Hofmann actively aided the FAA investigation. Virgin terminated him just a few weeks later on August 26, 2014. He was given no chance to speak or ask questions. His company identification was seized and he was escorted out of the building by security. His access to the company intranet and his Virgin email account were immediately terminated. Virgin refused to provide him with a written statement of the reasons for his termination after he requested one.
- 15. Virgin failed to follow the clearly-established written policy of progressive discipline in the Pilot Rule Book, its written agreement with the company's pilots that governs the terms and conditions of their employment. Captain Hofmann was never given any verbal counseling, an Initial Performance Improvement Plan, or a Final Performance Improvement Plan. Instead, Virgin summarily terminated this long-term employee for pretextual reasons. The company then summarily denied Captain Hofmann an appeal of the disciplinary action before a committee of peer pilots.
- Captain Hofmann is informed and believes and thus alleges that Virgin has displayed a pattern of violating the confidentiality important to certain FAA programs, and retaliating against employees who have brought these matters to management's attention.
- 17. Captain Hofmann's internal complaints and external complaints to the FAA, including his safety-related ASAP report, his concerns about Virgin's handling of the safety complaint program, and his report to the FAA raising these concerns, were all contributing factors in Virgin's adverse employment actions against him, including his termination.
- 18. Captain Hofmann's termination after nearly eight years of serving as one of Virgin's original pilot captains caused him great humiliation, anguish, and mental suffering, in addition to the ending of his career as an accomplished senior U.S. pilot. The termination

prevented him from obtaining work as a commercial pilot domestically, and he has been forced to leave the country to obtain work overseas. He has lost very substantial wages and benefits as a result.

#### IV. FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

Tortious Wrongful Termination in Violation of Public Policy

- 19. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 18.
- 20. Defendant's actions in terminating Plaintiff under the circumstances alleged above, violate the fundamental public policies in California and under federal law, embodied, among elsewhere, in: Cal. Lab. Code § 1102.5; the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment And Reform Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (AIR 21), 49 U.S.C.A.§ 42121; and Federal Aviation Regulation, 14 C.F.R. §91.3.
- 21. Defendant's conduct in terminating Plaintiff under these circumstances constitutes wrongful termination in violation of public policy.
- 22. As a proximate result of Defendant's actions, Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer substantial loss of earnings and other employment benefits, and has suffered and continues to suffer pain, embarrassment, humiliation and mental anguish, all to his damage in an amount according to proof.
- 23. Defendant's actions were willful, malicious, fraudulent, and oppressive, and were committed with the wrongful intent to injure Plaintiff and in conscious disregard of Plaintiff's rights.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff seeks relief as set forth below.

#### V. SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of California Labor Code Section 1102.5)

- 24. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 18.
- 25. Defendant's actions, as described above, violate California Labor Code sections1102.5(b). Section 1102.5(b) prohibits an employer from retaliating against an employee for

disclosing information to a government agency or threatening to disclose to a governmental agency, where the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of state or federal statute, or a violation or noncompliance with a state or federal rule or regulation.

- 26. As a proximate result of Defendant's actions, Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer substantial loss of earnings and other employment benefits, and has suffered and continues to suffer pain, embarrassment, humiliation and mental anguish, all to his damage in an amount according to proof.
- 27. Defendant's actions were willful, malicious, fraudulent, and oppressive, and were committed with the wrongful intent to injure Plaintiff and in conscious disregard of Plaintiff's rights.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff seeks relief as set forth below.

#### VI. THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

(Breach of Contract)

- 28. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 18.
- 29. Virgin and its pilots, including Plaintiff Captain Hofmann, entered into a written agreement governing the terms and conditions of Captain Hofmann's employment at Virgin. The written agreement, known as the Pilot Rule Book, constitutes a contract between Virgin and Captain Hofmann.
- 30. Through the contract between Captain Hofmann and Virgin, the company has committed that pilots, including Captain Hofmann, would not be terminated without just cause. The company also agreed to utilize a progressive discipline policy that includes verbal warnings and two-step performance improvement plans before terminating a pilot.
- 31. Plaintiff Captain Hofmann performed all conditions, covenants and promises pursuant to the Pilot Rule Book, except to the extent that such performance was excused or made impossible to do by the actions of Defendant Virgin. Defendant breached its contract with Captain Hofmann by terminating him without just cause and without having applied its agreed-

upon progressive discipline system.

- 32. Defendant Virgin's actions in breaching the agreement has destroyed Captain Hofmann's domestic airline pilot career, has denied him wages and benefits under the agreement, and has harmed him in other ways.
- 33. As a result of Defendant's breach of its agreement with Captain Hofmann, he has sustained compensatory and consequential damages in an amount to be proved at trial, together with interest thereon at the maximum rate permitted by law.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff seeks relief as set forth below.

# VII. FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(Tortious Breach of the Covenant of Good Faith and Fair Dealing)

- 34. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 18.
- 35. In all contracts, including the agreement here, there is an implied covenant by each party not to do anything that will deprive the other party of the benefits of the contract. This covenant not only imposes upon each contracting party the duty to refrain from doing anything that would render performance of the contract impossible by any act of that party's own, but also the duty to do everything the contract presupposed that party would do to accomplish the purpose of the contract.
- 36. Plaintiff Captain Hofmann performed all conditions, covenants and promises pursuant to the Pilot Rule Book agreement except to the extent that such performance was excused or made impossible to do by the actions of Defendant Virgin.
- 37. Defendant Virgin breached the covenant of good faith and fair dealing in its contract with Captain Hofmann by terminating him without just cause and without having applied its agreed-upon progressive discipline system.
- 38. Defendant Virgin's actions in breaching the agreement and violating its covenant of good faith and fair dealing have destroyed Captain Hofmann's domestic airline pilot career, have denied him wages and benefits under the agreement, have caused severe emotional distress, and have harmed him in other ways.

39. As a result of Defendant's breach of its covenant of good faith and fair dealing						
in its agreement with Captain Hofmann, he has sustained compensatory and consequential						
damages in an amount to be proved at trial, together with interest thereon at the maximum rate						
permitted by law.						
40. Defendant's actions were willful, malicious, fraudulent, and oppressive, and were						
committed with the wrongful intent to injure Plaintiff and in conscious disregard of Plaintiff's						
rights.						
WHEREFORE, Plaintiff seeks relief as set forth below.						
VIII. REQUEST FOR RELIEF						
Plaintiff requests judgment against Defendant Virgin America as follows:						
1. Compensatory damages, including lost past wages and benefits, and emotional						
distress damages, in a sum according to proof;						
2. Exemplary damages;						
3. Interest on judgment including prejudgment interest, at the legal rate;						
4. Attorneys' fees and costs; and						
5. For such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.						
DATED: August 5, 2016 DICKSON GEESMAN LLP						
By: Kath Bukes Dik  KATHRYN BURKETT DICKSON  Attorneys for Plaintiff  IAN HOFMANN						
DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL						
Plaintiff hereby demands a jury trial on all claims to which he is entitled to a decision by jury.						
DATED: August 5, 2016 DICKSON GEESMAN LLP						
By: Kath Luded Oue  KATHRYN BURKETT DICKSON  Attorneys for Plaintiff  IAN HOFMANN						

Complaint for Damages; Demand for Jury Trial

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# SUMMONS (CITACION JUDICIAL)

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: VIRGIN AMERICA, INC. and DOES 1 through 10 (AVISO AL DEMANDADO):

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: IAN HOFMANN (LO ESTÀ DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):

SUM-100 SAN MATEO COUNTY AUG - 5 2016 Olerk of the Superior Court

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. ¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Sí no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación

Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podré quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia.

Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services, (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos exentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 ó más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso.

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y dirección de la corte es): Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo 400 County Center Redwood City, California 94063 The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: Kathryn Burkett Dickson (El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): DICKSON GEESMAN LLP 1999 Harrison Street, Suite 2000, OAKLAND, CA 94612 510-899-4670 Clerk, ERODINA M. CATALANO DATE: Deputy (Fecha) (Secretario) (Adjunto) (For proof of service of this summons, use Proof of Service of Summons (form POS-010).) (Para prueba de entrega de esta citatión use el formulario Proof of Service of Summons, (POS-010)) NOTICE TO THE PERSON SERVED: You are served 16 - CIV - 00799 [SEAL] SUM 1. as an individual defendant. Summons Issued / Filed as the person sued under the fictitious name of (specify): 140222 on behalf of (specify): under: CCP 416.10 (corporation) CCP 416.60 (minor) CCP 416.20 (defunct corporation) CCP 416.70 (conservatee) CCP 416.40 (association or partnership) CCP 416.90 (authorized person) other (specify): by personal delivery on (date):

		CM	I-010						
ATTORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY (Name, State Bay no Kathryn Burkett Dickson		FOR COURT USE ONLY							
DICKSON GEESMAN LLP 1999 Harrison Street, Suite 2000, OAKLAN	D, CA 94612	SAN MATEO COUNTY							
TELEPHONE NO.: 510-899-4670 ATTORNEY FOR (Name): Ian Hofmann	fax no.:510-899-4671	SANMAILO							
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SAN									
STREET ADDRESS: 400 County Center		Clerk of the Superior Court							
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(Amount (Amount demanded s	Filed with first appearance by defen	I rines.							
exceeds \$25,000) \$25,000 or less)	(Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.402)								
Items 1–6 belo	w must be completed (see instructions								
1. Check one box below for the case type that	best describes this case:	,							
Auto Tort	Contract	Provisionally Complex Civil Litigation	_ l						
Auto (22)	Breach of contract/warranty (06)	(Cal. Rules of Court, rules 3.400–3.403)							
Uninsured motorist (46)	Rule 3.740 collections (09)	Antitrust/Trade regulation (03)	i						
Other Pi/PD/WD (Personal Injury/Property Damage/Wrongful Death) Tort	Other collections (09)	Construction defect (10) Mass tort (40)							
Asbestos (04)	Insurance coverage (18)	, ·	1						
Product liability (24)	Contract (37) Real Property	Securities litigation (28) Environmental/Toxic tort (30)							
Medical malpractice (45)	Eminent domain/Inverse	Insurance coverage claims arising from the	i ta						
Other PI/PD/WD (23)	condemnation (14)	above listed provisionally complex case	She						
Non-PI/PD/WD (Other) Tort	Wrongful eviction (33)	types (41)	799						
Business ton/unfair business practice (07)	Other real property (26)	Enforcement of Judgment	16 - CIV - 00799 CCCS Civil Case Cover Sheet 140220						
Civil rights (08)	Unlawful Detainer	Enforcement of judgment (20)	Cas Cas						
Defamation (13)	Commercial (31)	Miscellaneous Civil Complaint	1500 150 150 150 150 150 150 150 150 150						
Fraud (16)	Residential (32)	RICO (27)	-						
Intellectual property (19)	Judicial Review	Other complaint (not specified above) (42)							
Professional negligence (25) Other non-PI/PD/WD tort (35)	Asset forfeiture (05)	Miscellaneous Civil Petition							
Employment	Petition re: arbitration award (11)	Partnership and corporate governance (21)	)						
X Wrongful termination (36)	Writ of mandate (02)	Other petition (not specified above) (43)							
Other employment (15)	Other judicial review (39)								
2. This case is X is not compl	ex under rule 3,400 of the California R	ules of Court. If the case is complex, mark the	e 						
factors requiring exceptional judicial manage	ement:	, ,							
a. Large number of separately repres		er of witnesses							
b. Extensive motion practice raising difficult or novel e. Coordination with related actions pending in one or more courts									
Issues that will be time-consuming to resolve In other counties, states, or countries, or in a federal count									
c. Substantial amount of documentary	evidence f Substantial p	postjudgment judicial supervision							
3. Remedies sought (check all that apply): a.[	X monetary b. nonmonetary;	declaratory or injunctive relief c. X punit	tive						
4. Number of causes of action (specify):4 (Wr									
5. This case is X is not a class	action suit.	,							
6. If there are any known related cases, file an	d serve a notice of related case. (You	may use form CM-015.)							
Date: August 5, 2016	,								
Kathryn Burkett Dickson	) Não	the kurkett Dad							
(TYPE OR PRINT NAME)		SIGNATURE OF PARTY OR ATTORNEY FOR PARTY)							
in sanctions.	lelfare and Institutions Code). (Cal. Rul	ng (except small claims cases or cases filed les of Court, rule 3.220.) Failure to file may re	esult						
• File this cover sheet in addition to any cover sheet required by local court rule.									
If this case is complex under rule 3.400 et seq. of the California Rules of Court, you must serve a copy of this cover sheet on all other parties to the action or proceeding.									
<ul> <li>Unless this is a collections case under rule 3.740 or a complex case, this cover sheet will be used for statistical purposes only.</li> </ul>									

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